

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Maia Freedman. I am a resident of Stamford for 20 years. I am a member of Connecticut Against Gun Violence.

I urge you to support the \$3.6 million included in the Governor's budget adjustment bill for the Department of Public Health to fund gun violence prevention programs.

In 2014 my niece in Baltimore attended Carver Center, an arts high school that had a troubled student who was apprehended. The youth admitted he had the family gun, had already brought it to school, and wanted to kill a lot of people. Thanks to an astute witness and a knowledgeable policeman, many lives were saved.

In 2015, my cousin who teaches at Delta State University was on lockdown with her students for hours while police searched for a gunman who murdered 2 people and killed himself.

On October 27, 2018, 11 people were murdered by a gun wielding, hate-filled fanatic at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, my hometown. My parents and I are members of Congregation Dor Hadash, the target of the shooter. My father was late for services that day and was not among the victims. The experience engendered a visceral sense of fear, and trauma that persists.

When will our luck run out? When will any of our families suffer the grievous loss of a loved one because we refuse to act to prevent gun violence? When will any of you experience that surreal feeling that my cousin felt on lockdown, that I felt during the Tree of Life shooting, that many children and adults in our Connecticut cities feel EVERY DAY?

Who will help us end gun violence if we refuse to help ourselves?

Today, you have an opportunity to fund gun violence prevention programs with \$3.6 million over two years. I support this and urge you to do so, too.

I also urge you to do more. The legislature can create an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in the Department of Public Health and commit the needed levels of funding.

There will be 2 more fatal shootings in Connecticut this week. Connecticut needs an Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

Thank you,

Maia Freedman

Stamford, CT